



It's a Wonderful Life

Discussion Group Packet

Film Discussion Guidelines

Dear Discussion Group

Next week you will be leading the class in a discussion of the film you just saw. In other words, you will be teaching the class. That's kind of scary at first, but most of the students who have done it really seemed to enjoy it and got a lot out of it. Most of the groups have done some very good things. Here are some guidelines to help you make your class successful:

- Plan enough activities to teach the entire class period. In reality I will need about 5-10 minutes at the end of class to talk about the next film, etc., but it is better for you to have too many activities than not enough.
- Try to involve the class in your discussions as much as possible. Some ways to do this:
 - Break the class up into small discussion groups of about 5 students to talk about questions you ask.
 - Write the questions you want students to discuss on the board and make sure they know what you want them to do.
 - When students are discussing among themselves all the members of your group should scatter around the room listening in on discussions to help students if as necessary and to make sure that they are speaking English.
 - If students aren't responding to your questions it's OK to call on them anyway.
 - It's OK to use Chinese names when calling on students.
 - Have students stand when they talk. This makes it easier to hear them in the back of the room.
- Giving background information on the movie is good but please don't use information from the textbook; students can read this for themselves. The internet is a great source of new information.

Activities for Film Discussions

You can use any or none of these ideas; it's up to you:

1. Write some discussion questions on the board and divide the class into groups to talk about them. You can use some of the questions in this packet and/or questions on the homework assignments. (The post-viewing homework is especially good for finding discussion questions.) Better yet, make up some questions of your own.

One good way of dividing the class in to discussion groups is to have them count off from 1 to 5 (or whatever). All the 1s go to the first group, the 2s to the second, etc.

2. Use a computer to write up a summary of the movie plot and then print a copy for each group. Cut the copies into strips, one paragraph or sentence on each strip. Mix up the strips for each copy and give them to the groups. The groups have to put the strips in the right order.
3. Have students write a letter from one character to another in the movie 5 or 10 years later. The letter might tell what happened after the movie was over or might explain why the character behaved the way he/she did in the movie.
4. Bring some costumes and props and have the class act out certain scenes. You can use the dialogue in the textbook.
5. Have students write their own questions about the movie then ask them to the class.
6. For the last activity, ask every student in the class to rate the film in stars, 5 stars being great, 4 good, etc. and tell why they think so. Tally the number of stars on the board.

It's a Wonderful Life
Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion
from www.eslnotes.com

1. Does this movie have a basic message? What is it?
2. The setting of this movie was a small town, Bedford Falls. Why wasn't the setting a big city, like New York? Think about what big cities and small towns might symbolize in American culture. Is this symbolism also true of Chinese culture?
3. What are some of the economic and business issues addressed in this movie that are still around today?
4. Were you surprised when George became so angry after Uncle Billy lost the \$8,000?
5. Do you think the world of business still has people that are like both George and Potter?
6. If you had been in George's position, would you have considered working for Potter?
7. Has this movie dated well? What did you like or dislike about it?

Miscellaneous links for It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

1. [Imagine Casting - Create your own Cast](#)
2. [Noir Dame - Essay on the meaning behind IAWL](#)
3. ["It's A Wonderful Life" in 30 seconds...with bunnies](#)
4. [Classic Movie Kisses - Classic Film Guide](#)
5. [DVD Savant - It's a Wonderful Recut?](#)
6. [DVDwolf](#)
7. [Filmaffinity \(spanish\)](#)
8. [It's a Wonderful Life Tribute](#)
9. [James Stewart site \(Spanish\)](#)
10. [The Genuine Classic Movies website \(spanish\)](#)
11. [GoneMovie.com - Synopsis, news, pics, sounds](#)
12. [Poster](#)
13. [MovieMaze.de \(German\)](#)
14. [New Video Film-Lexikon \(German\)](#)
15. [Reel Classics](#)
16. [High school where famous swimming pool scene was filmed.](#)
17. [SoundtrackCollector - Soundtrack Information](#)
18. [Directory site with information and multimedia content.](#)
19. [Classic Movies](#)
20. [TrulyMovingPictures.org](#)
21. [Zelluloid.de - info \(German\)](#)